



## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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# **Illinois Department of Public Health Highlights Importance of Getting Tested Amid Ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic**

*Administration has Increased Testing Capacity to Average of 50,000 a Day*

**SPRINGFIELD** – Following the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) recent announcement on changes regarding COVID-19 testing protocols, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is reminding all Illinois residents of the importance of getting tested, including after close contact with someone who has tested positive. The Pritzker administration’s strategy to combat COVID-19 across Illinois has always relied on increased testing. IDPH state labs were the first labs outside of the CDC to test successfully for COVID-19 early in the state’s pandemic response. Since March, Illinois has tested more than 3.8 million COVID-19 specimens and has expanded testing to areas in the northern, central, and southern parts of the state.

“In the face of increasing infections, we need to promote more testing, not less, to identify new cases and interrupt further transmission,” said Illinois Department of Public Health Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike. “Given that asymptomatic individuals have been linked to virus spread, we will maintain our more stringent guidance to support testing of any Illinois resident who thinks they may have been exposed, as well as asymptomatic close contacts of confirmed cases 5-7 days post exposure.”

The recent change in federal guidelines on COVID-19 testing does not recommend asymptomatic individuals who come into close contact with a confirmed case be tested for the deadly virus. Many individuals who test positive for COVID-19 have not reported having symptoms. However, scientific studies have proven that those individuals are still able to spread the disease to family, friends, and members of their community who may become sick and require medical attention and even hospitalization, especially for those with underlying health conditions. Illinois will continue advising anyone who comes into close contact with a confirmed case be tested.

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There are almost 300 testing sites in Illinois, including 11 state operated community-based testing sites and 12 mobile testing teams that collect specimens at facilities experiencing outbreaks (such as nursing homes and correctional centers) and areas around the state reporting increased cases. Additionally, IDPH is deploying its Wellness on Wheels mobile unit to hotspots around the state to work with local health providers to collect specimens. Testing at state operated sites is at no cost to the individual, as are several other sites. More information about locations, times, and requirements can be found at <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/testing>.

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